

Donald G. Racette

June 21, 1936 - November 3, 2020

Don Racette, age 84, of Conway, South Carolina lived a full life and passed away Tuesday, surrounded by his wife and three children. He was born on the first day of Summer in Albany, NY on Sunday, June 21, 1936 and left this earth on his mother's birthday, Tuesday, November 3, 2020. He was the son of the late Raoul and Beatrice (Zollinger) Racette.

Don was a 1954 graduate of Vincentian Institute and received his undergraduate degree in Broadcasting in 1958 from Michigan State University. Upon graduation, he chose to enlist in the U.S. Army and served in Fort Greely, Alaska as an Army radio and television program director from 1958-1961. A devoted "Sparty" fan, Don went on to earn his Masters in Speech Education from Michigan State University in 1965 and also started work on his PhD. soon thereafter.

On July 28, 1962, Don married his high school sweetheart and the love of his life, Elaine Marie Kokoski. They made their home on Park Avenue in Hadley, NY, where they raised their three children, Mark, Donna, and Debbie. For Don and Elaine, family was everything. As a family, they shared countless inside jokes, made-up songs for pretty much everything, and enjoyed camping in upstate New York, Virginia Beach, VA, and Myrtle Beach, SC.

Above all, Don and Elaine were united through a strong faith and love for

Jesus Christ, which they shared with their children and grandchildren. Don was a lector and Eucharistic Minister in the Catholic Church and in his later years, accompanied his wife and friends to many senior care facilities to share God's unconditional love through music.

In 1963, Don was recruited by Hadley Luzerne Central School (HLCS) to leave broadcasting full time to teach public speaking at both the middle school and high school levels. His teaching career at HLCS spanned 28 years and he was beloved by teachers, students, and administrators alike. Additionally, he stepped into the roles of director of communications, yearbook editor, and high school play director. During this time, he also worked part time teaching broadcasting at Adirondack Community College and was a program director, talk show host, and disc jockey at WWSC 1450 AM in Glens Falls, NY.

In 1997, Don and Elaine moved to Myrtle Beach, SC to enjoy retirement and their shared love of the ocean. A man in perpetual motion, Don continued to teach public speaking for more than a decade on the campuses of Horry-Georgetown Technical College in Myrtle Beach, SC.

With a commanding 6'5" frame and notable radio voice, Don was larger than life, both in person with his family and students, and through the airwaves from behind the microphone. He is well known for his unique sense of humor, train chasing with his children and their friends, love of dogs, and penchant for all things 1950s music. A child at heart, Don loved Christmas, ferris wheels, merry go rounds, posing with life-sized costumed characters, and surprising others with meaningful, thoughtful gifts.

Even decades after retiring from teaching, his former students consider him a great mentor, who challenged, encouraged, and loved them toward their highest and greatest good. His zest and energy for life was contagious and he was always the life of the party.

In addition to his parents, Don is predeceased by his twin brother, John Walter and their older brother, C. Robert "Bob" Racette. Survivors besides his wife Elaine of 58 years, include one son, Mark and his wife, Annie of Omaha, NE and their three children, Ella (16), Colleen (11), and Bobby (8); two daughters, Donna Racette and her boyfriend, Dr. Jonathan Yalowchuk of Boston, MA; and Debbie and her husband, Colonel Kris Barcomb of Lompoc, CA and their three children, Lainey (16), Caroline (11), and Emily (6); and several nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, and cousins.

Bravo! for a life well lived, Mr. Don Racette. Rest in peace.

Funeral services will be conducted at 1:00pm on Thursday, November 5, 2020 at St. Andrew Catholic Church, 503 37th Ave N, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577. He will receive military funeral honors in a private military burial at the Florence National Cemetery. Those who would like to share a comment or leave a memory with the family may do so in a comment here.

Cemetery Details

Florence National Cemetery

803 E National Cemetery Road
Florence, SC 29506

Previous Events

Funeral Service

NOV 5. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Andrew Catholic Church
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

Tribute Wall

JT

“ I am sorry sorry to hear of Don's passing. He was a great friend and colleague during our time together at WWSC. Many a Sunday morning, I would drag my tired, 20-something self into the newsroom, only to be awakened by this jolt of energy sitting in the control room, and be greeted over the intercom with a big hello. Don's lasting impression on we was that friendly, outgoing force of life, trying to brighten everyone's day. He truly was a friend and a joy to work with. We had many wonderful talks, and shared many laughs. I called him Dandy Don, and he dubbed me "Jeffy."

After I left the area, my Dad would tell me how he would see Don at a remote, greeting my Dad with that same, friendly spirit. I much appreciated him brightening a day for my Dad.

I pray that those good memories of him bring a smile in sad times, and continue to bless you and your family each day.

Jeff Troeber

Jeff Troeber - November 17, 2020 at 04:04 AM

WU

“ Thanks for your service Soldier !!!
Wayne Williams
United States Marine Corps



Wayne Williams - USMC - November 15, 2020 at 03:56 PM

DM

“ Dear Elaine and family,
Even though I only knew Don the last 10 or so years, I felt like it was forever. He never liked coming to the office but knew we would do our best to take care of him. He always told me he would say a rosary for me on his next walk with his dog. I will never forget our “special “ rosary bond. RIP Don. My staff and I will truly miss you.
Dr. Sarah Machowski.

Dr. Sarah Machowski - November 08, 2020 at 11:36 AM

DF

“ Dear Mrs. Racette, Debbie, Mark, and Donna,
I have many fond memories of your family while growing up. Mr. Racette always kept us smiling and laughing. I am so sorry for your loss. I wish you peace and strength through this sad time. May you find comfort in your countless loving memories. Love, Denise Foster

Denise Foster - November 06, 2020 at 07:35 PM

KH

“ Elaine and family..I was very sorry to hear of Don’s passing..He was a wonderfull person and will be missed..we are really gonna miss seeing him out walking Trixie....Dan & Kathy Halfpenny...prayers for the family 🙏🙏🙏

Kathy Halfpenny - November 05, 2020 at 05:08 PM



TY Kathy. It was wonderful sharing memories with you yesterday.

Love, Don's middle daughter, Donna

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 08:44 AM

JP

“ We are so sorry to hear of Don's passing, Elaine. We will be praying for you and your family during this difficult time. Wally and Jackie

JACQUELINE PHILIPS - November 05, 2020 at 04:18 PM



Thank you, Mrs. Philips. We love you.

Love, Donna

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 08:45 AM

BM

“ Dear Elaine, Donna, Mark, and Debbie,

So sorry to hear of Don's passing. Speech director, play director, yearbook advisor, actor in a few Lions Club plays. (I seem to remember a couch rolling downhill off the back of stage at the edge of the Holy Infancy parking lot.) My life was enriched and blessed by time spent at the Racette's: Elaine's piano lessons, prayer group meetings on the back porch, babysitting. Don and my brother, Jim, both spent time on the air at WWSC. Thanks, all of you, for sharing the tall guy with the great grin with all of us. It'll be exciting, when our times come, to see how God's using the talents He gave Don in Heaven.

God bless you all!

Barbara Brewer La Mere

Barbara Brewer La Mere - November 05, 2020 at 04:18 PM

WU

“ Thanks for your service Soldier !!!
Wayne Williams
United States Marine Corps



Wayne Williams - USMC - November 05, 2020 at 11:41 AM

MZ

“ "You will not be nervous speaking in public if you are prepared." Mr. Racette. Day 1 public speaking. A great educator. I always looked forward to seeing him in and out of HLCS. My deepest condolences to all.

Mark Zimmermann - November 05, 2020 at 11:12 AM



I love this, Mark. Thank you for sharing!

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 08:46 AM

DC

“ Don's gentle respectful personality, sense of humor, energy, devotion to teaching and broadcasting, reverence for his friends and love of the oldies leave warm and happy memories I will gratefully carry for the rest of my days. Peace be with you, Don, Elaine, Donna, Debbie and Mark. My prayers and perpetual thoughts are with you.

Dave Covey - November 05, 2020 at 11:01 AM



TYSM Dave. The times you shared with our Dad were always filled with such joy. So many great memories.

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 08:48 AM

NW

“ *Dear Elaine and Family,
My sincere condolences to you on the passing of Don. May God bless you with some peace and comfort during this time.
Love In Christ,
Nancy Webber 🙏*

Nancy Webber - November 05, 2020 at 10:43 AM

CB

“ *Grampy was always so fun to visit. I remember showing him magic tricks when I came. He was a great person who I loved to see, and I know he is now with God. Love you Grampy 💕*

Caroline Barcomb - November 05, 2020 at 10:40 AM



awwwwww what a great memory, ChaCha!! He loved you very much (and yes - those magic tricks were so impressive to him!! - hope you didn't give away all your magic trick secrets). LOVE YOU! ~ Aunt Donna xo

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 08:50 AM

JG

“ *Mr. Racette was forever a favorite teacher in my high school. He took the time to encourage us to relax and enjoy speaking in public. He and his wife were a large part of my adolescence.*

Janine Gardner - November 05, 2020 at 08:17 AM

MW

“ Mrs.Racette and family: We are sorry to hear of your loss. We enjoyed Mr. Racette as a teacher. All of you will be in our thoughts and prayers. Mona(Williams)/Claude(Tink) Wright. May he RIP.

Mona Wright - November 05, 2020 at 07:23 AM

BH

“ Mr. Racette was a great teacher and mentor. I took speech with him in my senior year. I have always hated any public speaking but he made it more enjoyable. He taught us well by example also of how to love others and life. My favorite memory is a study hall he proctor. His line every time was "sit down, shut up, and take out a book ". He will be missed. Many pleasant memories reading his obituary.

Beth Burroughs Hughes - November 05, 2020 at 05:53 AM



“ I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Don Racette. I knew him during the time in the early 90's when he was Faculty Advisor of Adirondack Community College radio station WGFR. He was hosting a daily talk show then on WWSC which I listened to frequently. He was a kind gentleman who gave us student broadcasters a good example. My thoughts and prayers are with those who loved him.

Jason Wentworth - November 04, 2020 at 10:00 PM

FP

“ My prayers and love go to Elaine,Mark,Donna and Debbie. You all became a wonderful friend to me and my family. I have many memories of all the good times we spent together. Don is now with the Lord.

Fran Pickens - November 04, 2020 at 08:23 PM



We love you so much, Aunt Fran! xo xo

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 08:51 AM

RQ

“*Mr. Racette was my high school speech teacher and high school musical director. I can still remember that loud over-the-top loving life laugh of his. Even after I graduated from high school he organized a group to come and see the college musical “Anything Goes” where I was playing a character who has had too much to drink. I can still see the look on his face and hear that laugh when I burst through a set of doors in “Sit Down Your Rockin the Boat”. I always appreciated the time he took to care for his students. He will be missed but reading this obituary brought only good memories and a smile to my face. Well done Mr. Racette! Well done!*

Richard Quirion

Richard Quirion - November 04, 2020 at 08:17 PM

YT

“*Your Chosen Family at Optavia Tribe purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Donald G. Racette.*



Your Chosen Family at Optavia Tribe - November 04, 2020 at 07:56 PM

LB

“ Grampy, you lived such an amazing life filled with happiness and love and I'm so glad to be apart of the wonderful family you helped create. You'll forever be in my prayers and I'm so happy for you that you've completed your journey and are now resting with God forever. ❤️

Lainey Barcomb - November 04, 2020 at 06:50 PM



This is beautiful. I am so grateful for you, Lainey Love. Grampy loved you so much and was so proud of your awesome acting skills. For certain, he would've had lead roles for you in the musicals he directed. LOVE YOU! ~Aunt Donna

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 09:03 AM

ER

“ To my grampy, I love you so much. You had such a good heart, and such a good soul. I am so thankful that you are going up to Heaven to be with Jesus. I am so thankful to know I will see you again. Our God is so good, and he finally took you home. Thank you for all the smiles, laughs and funny stories. And I still will keep my promise- no boys until I am 30.

ella racette - November 04, 2020 at 06:22 PM



Just beautiful, Ella. Grampy passed that good heart directly on to you and you wear it well. He loved you so very much and was so proud of you for everything you are - and for certain, agreeing "no boys till age 30" haha! LOVE YOU! ~Aunt Donna

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 09:12 AM

KF

“ My deepest condolences to Don’s family this tribute was Don through and through . Don was a wonderful radio personality and had a gentle soul . A memory I’d love to share with his family is very special to me and maybe a bit odd 😊 we are going back at least 30 + years when he had his talk show. He would joke every day about running out of coffee and “ asking someone to bring him a cup! I went out bought a special mug and delivered it to him after that it was an on going joke and he nicknamed me Kathy coffee cup he put a smile on me I am so happy I had the privilege to be a radio friend Don I will miss our Facebook chats Rest in paradise God has a great place for you 🙏🥹

kathy flewelling fordrung - November 04, 2020 at 06:19 PM



oh wow, "Kathy Coffee Cup" ! What a great memory! TYSM for sharing!
Love, Don's middle daughter, Donna

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 09:14 AM

RH

“ Elaine you & your family are surely in my thoughts & prayers. Love ya

Rosa Hardee - November 04, 2020 at 06:06 PM

SJ

“ I know Mr. Racette from visiting Lakewood Campground as a kid and became great friends with daughter Debbie. I grew very fond of the Racette family very quickly. I don't think I ever saw Mr. Racette without that big smile on his face. And oh my gosh was he funny!! I know he was an amazing man and will be missed greatly. See you in heaven!!!

Sarah Jones - November 04, 2020 at 06:05 PM

TD

“ Rest in peace Mr Racette from Teresa ,your hospice nurse.

Teresa DeBolt - November 04, 2020 at 05:54 PM

DB

Our family is so grateful to you, Teresa. Thank you very much for the loving care you provided to our Dad. You brought all of us comfort during this difficult time.

Debbie Barcomb - November 04, 2020 at 06:07 PM



Mr R was my speech teacher and directed the plays I acted in. He was a very special teacher and person. Mrs R...my thoughts and prayers are with you. Ginny Planck Fagan

Ginny Fagan - November 04, 2020 at 10:12 PM



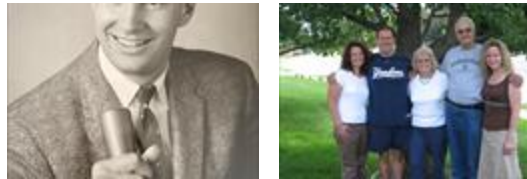
Teresa!!!our angel! Our family is beyond grateful for your grace, love, forthrightness, and the way you simply "got" us. Thank you for the comfort and understanding you brought our family during the final part of Daddy's journey here on earth.

Love, Donna

Donna Racette - November 06, 2020 at 09:17 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Goldfinch Funeral Home - November 04, 2020 at 04:55 PM